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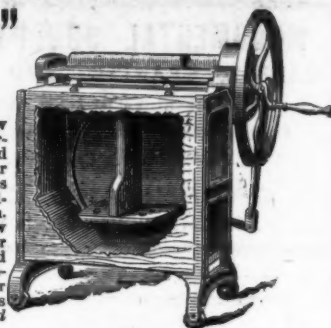
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"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

No. 236. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, JUNE 7, 1873.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HOBSON'S CHOICE," &c.

### CHAPTER VIII. MR. BYGRAVE.

PURRINGTON opinion was unfavourable to the plan that had been adopted for my education. It was viewed as absurd and even somewhat presumptuous. It was certainly unprecedented. "What be neighbour Orme thinking about?" Mr. Jobling, of the Home Farm, had been heard to inquire. "Is he going to make a passon of his nevvv? Where be the good of hiring Passon Bygrave to stuff his head wi' Latton and Greek and such like? He'll ruin the boy. Better by half take and send un out to scare the craws or learn to do summut useful. No good won't come on't. I'd learned to plough a straight furrow, and to handle a prong like e'er a man on my farm, long avore I was his age. Besides, who wants a passon coming in and out of a farm-house day arter day, like an old woman? It's quite ridic'ous. I'm surprised at neighbour Orme. But, there, 'tis no use talking about it, I suppose. He seems main bent on it. But I'm none so terrible fond of passons myself; except on Sundays of course."

Sentiments of this kind were so generally expressed that I could not help hearing them. And I, too, was inclined to think that the education Mr. Bygrave was engaged to impart was in the nature of a vain and valueless thing. Why should I be taught so much more than my neighbours? It seemed to me rather foolish, and, what was even worse, feminine, to be instructed in accomplishments they had never felt the lack of. It was like learning to sew or to hem; useful arts in their way, no doubt, but unworthy of a male creature's

acquiring. Happily, Mr. Bygrave did his duty, so far as he could, as my instructor.

To the young child education is much as medicine; even if he believe in the draught's power to benefit him, yet he knows that its taste is disagreeable. Or if he begins to quaff it eagerly, his appetite soon fails. He does not yet appreciate the pleasures of duty; wisdom is weariness, and ignorance still blissful to him. He finds it hard to love the preceptor, who plucks him from idle delights, tethers him to school-books, and expects him to enjoy the change.

I fear I did not do Mr. Bygrave justice. Decidedly I did not love him. There was, indeed, a certain lack of sympathy between us. He was not, I think, intentionally unkind or impatient, but he was unable to take account of my childishness. He seemed to fancy that my small weak legs could keep pace with his long strides, as we trod together the highways of wisdom. He knew so much himself that he could not credit the ignorance of others. He often taxed me with trying to be stupid, which certainly would have been a supererogatory effort on my part. And my boyish inability to value duly the treasures of classical literature, he estimated as something amazing in its grossness and inanity.

If the authors of the remote past were to me but unappetising food, they were as meat and drink to Mr. Bygrave. The very thought of them always seemed to bring him new support and enjoyment. He lingered fondly over long quotations from them, smacking his lips after his utterances, as though the flavour of fine old wine had rejoiced his palate. He could deliver prodigious speeches from Greek plays, as easily as I could pour out beer. He was, indeed, in love with the dead, and especially with the dead languages, and appeared to have



no heart or hope for the living world of to-day. I remember the almost painful astonishment it occasioned me when I once, by mere chance, discovered that he—so wise a man—had never read the *Vicar of Wakefield*, and was entirely uninformed as to the works of Smollett. He plainly intimated that he despised such productions. It often occurred to me, after this, that Mr. Bygrave had been born some two thousand years too late. How he would have enjoyed, I thought, the society of the ancient poets and historians! As to the opinion they would have entertained of him I could never quite make up my mind. I decided, however, that he would not have looked well in a toga.

He was a tall, gaunt, long-necked, narrow-chested man, with round shoulders, and thin, unstable legs. He had a habit of yawning frequently, stretching his limbs until his muscles cracked noisily like dry branches in a gale of wind, and opening wide his large mouth to close it again with a crash. He wore always a hungry look, insomuch that my mother was wont to insist that he suffered from insufficiency of food, and invariably provided him with substantial refreshment on his visits to the Down Farm House. His health did not appear to be infirm, although his complexion was pallid and his frame attenuated; he had a loud harsh voice and a barking method of speech. I often likened myself to one of Reube's lambs driven into classical folds or pastures by the barking of my tutor—acting as a sheep-dog for the occasion.

Mr. Bygrave was respected at Purrington, because, time out of mind, it had been the way at Purrington to respect the clergy. It was true that he only filled our pulpit and reading-desk in consequence of the extreme incapacity of our rector, old Mr. Gascoigne; and that he did not reside at the parsonage, but occupied apartments over the wheelwright's, "up-street," Purrington—it being, by the way, a firm conviction of my mother's that the wheelwright's premises were quite unworthy of Mr. Bygrave's tenancy, and that Mrs. Munday, the wheelwright's wife, in the way of providing and cooking for a gentleman, and generally in looking after his comfort, was but "a poor creature." Still, by reason of his officiating in Mr. Gascoigne's place, and of his being in his own right a clergyman, Mr. Bygrave was generally viewed with deference and regard throughout the parish; it being always understood, however, that he was not to be likened to the rector,

but was altogether a priest of inferior rank, if not, indeed, of a distinct species. In his younger days Mr. Gascoigne had been noted for his skill in field-sports, and famed as a huntsman and a shot. He farmed his own glebe, and his bowling was a thing of which elderly cricketers of the Purrington Club—an institution he had originated, and for some time mainly supported—still spoke with enthusiasm. Mr. Bygrave was wholly without gifts of this kind; he knew nothing of farming; he could neither ride nor shoot; and although he had upon request kept the score during the annual cricket match between Purrington and Bulborough, he had not been intrusted with that office a second time; his inefficiency was too glaring. That he was competent, however, to perform indispensable clerical duties in the way of marrying, christening, and burying the parishioners, could not be disputed; nor was much fault found with the sermons he was accustomed to deliver on Sunday afternoons throughout the year. Purrington did not criticise sermons; viewing them as wholesome performances which were rather to be endured, like surgical operations, than enjoyed, or indeed understood. It was thought, however, that they did good upon the whole; although this estimation of them regarded them somewhat in the light of the incantations of a wizard of good character. It must be said that Mr. Bygrave's discourses were not perhaps very well calculated for a rural congregation. One special effort of his, however, in the course of which he ventured upon certain Hebrew quotations of considerable length, won particular favour from his auditors. It was freely observed in the churchyard after service that Mr. Battersby, the vicar of Bulborough, the adjoining parish, could never have come up to that achievement. And that Mr. Bygrave, although a much younger man, possessed "a zight more learning."

Mr. Bygrave's position was not perhaps a very happy one. His means were very limited, and he was wholly without anything like congenial companionship. In such society as Purrington could furnish, he was certainly not seen to advantage. Not that he was shy or apparently ill at ease; but he was without power of speech upon matters that did not interest him, and was unable to sympathise, or to affect sympathy with the subjects that formed the staple of Purrington converse. What were to him the condition of the crops, the prices of barley, of sheep, or



of wool? Even the state of the weather was as nothing to him. He never seemed to know if the sun were shining or not, the wind blowing, or the rain falling. I had seen him on most bitter days, leisurely crossing the down, studying as he went the pocket Horace he always carried with him. Yet he was not perhaps to be pitied. He was happy after his own way. His studies were very dear to him, if they brought little tangible profit to him or to any one else. And he performed his duty fairly to the parishioners; although he *was* charged with reading from the Greek Testament, in lieu of the authorised version, to old Betty Heck, the shepherd's mother, during her long confinement to her bed with rheumatism, asthma, and other complaints. Still Betty had alleged that Mr. Bygrave's reading had done her "a power of good," although as a matter of choice she admitted her preference for the visits of old Mr. Gascoigne.

To Mr. Bygrave I feel that I owe much, and that acknowledgment of my obligations has been too long delayed. He compelled my acquaintance with a course of literature, concerning which I should have remained without information but for his labour and painstaking. It was no fault of his that I was but an idle and indifferent pupil, even though something might be said regarding his defects as a preceptor of extreme youth. But I am sure that he did his best; I wish I could think the same of my own endeavours.

Our lessons concluded, I often walked back with Mr. Bygrave part of the way to the village. Not that my society was any boon to him. But I was charged to carry certain little gifts of farm produce bestowed upon him by my mother—strong in her faith that the curate incurred the perils of starvation from the reckless incapacity and improvidence of his landlady, the wheelwright's wife. She had been in times long past, it appeared, a servant at the Down Farm, and had undergone summary dismissal for outrageous neglect of duty.

There was not usually much conversation between Mr. Bygrave and myself during these walks of ours. His notion of a pleasant topic would have related to the conjugation of some Greek verb of a distressingly irregular pattern, existing only for the confusion and torture of youthful students. But I held that such matters were quite unsuited to discussion out of school hours. For some time I walked

silent beside him, carrying a basket of eggs with rather a boyish longing to upset them, or to ascertain how far the basket could be tilted without danger to its contents. Presently I addressed him upon a subject that still much occupied me.

"Mr. Bygrave," I said, "did you ever see Lord Overbury?"

It was some time before he seemed to understand me. He had to descend, as it were, from lofty regions of thought to my lowly level.

"Overbury, Overbury," he murmured; "I seem to have heard the name."

Of course he had heard the name. Why, nearly the whole of Parrington parish belonged to Lord Overbury. Surely everybody had heard the name.

"Overbury, Overbury? Ah, I remember. No, I never saw him. It was before my time, some years. But I heard of it at the university. It was a disgraceful affair, I believe. But I never knew the particulars, nor wished to know them. He only avoided expulsion by taking his name off the books. So ended his academical career—unhappy man!"

What was I to make of this? Of what was he talking?

"I mean Lord Overbury," I explained.

"I mean Lord Overbury," he said. "No, I never saw him. Nor should I care to see him."

"He's gone to the great house—the hall."

"Has he? I don't know that his movements need concern you or me."

And he favoured me with a Latin quotation, which I did not quite follow.

Thereupon we parted, for we had arrived near the wheelwright's. I handed over the eggs, none of them broken, and turned towards home again.

Then I bethought me that I was no great distance from the Dark Tower. What if I were to steal up the gloomy avenue once more, and look about me? Surely no great harm would be done.

I had no plan in view. I was only moved by a vague and idle curiosity. I did not look for another adventure, nor to see the satyr again. I rather hoped not to see him; or I should not so much have minded seeing him provided he did not see me. I could not count upon his mood being so favourable as when we had met before. And he might reasonably object to my visiting him again so soon. It bore a prying look, as I felt.

I crept furtively up the avenue, startling

a cluster of rabbits that I came upon suddenly; but hardly startling them more than they startled me. All was wonderfully still otherwise.

Soon I was close to the great house. I left the path and hid myself in the shrubbery, peering through a tangle of branches.

The Dark Tower was dead again. The window of the room I had previously entered was now like all the other windows; the shutters were fast closed. It was as though my adventure had never been. The house had resumed its old aspect of emptiness, neglect, dreariness, death.

I turned to depart, for there was nothing to induce me to stay, when I heard a foot-step close beside me on the moss-coated gravel walk. Old Thacker confronted me.

I knew old Thacker of course, and rather feared him. He was rough of speech and manner, and his temper was sometimes violent. I had learned to estimate his condition of mind by the colour of his nose, which hoisted, as it were, storm signals when there was peril in approaching him. A crimson hue proclaimed some cheerfulness of disposition; but when his nose was of a deep purple, then he was certainly to be dreaded; at such times he was capable of anything. At least that was my conviction. In the present instance his most prominent feature wore a rosy glow that bespoke the dawn of intoxication. It was, so to speak, in the sunset of ebriety that the deeper tones lowered upon his face and manifested his descent into wrathful gloom. He might safely be addressed, therefore.

"I hope you're well, Mr. Thacker," I said in my politest way.

"Thankee, I be tarblish middlin'," he answered; meaning me to understand that his health was in a tolerable state. As he spoke he rattled the contents of a flower-pot he carried under his arm, and furnished a sort of castanet accompaniment to his speech. The flower-pot was full of snails. I had never before seen any evidence of his industry as a gardener. "Where bist ga-ing?" he demanded.

"His lordship said I might fish in the lake."

"Fish? There's narra fish there, but an old jack as big as me a'most. He's eat up all the rest. He'd eat you if you was to fall in. He'd eat hisself I do think if a' could only catch hold of a's tail. Tain't no morsel of use fishing there, lad. So you caught sight of 's lordship, eh?"

"Yes," I said, "I saw him."

"Well, he be gone agen, now."

"Gone?"

"Ees; what a' come vor, there, I dunno; nor why a's gone, nor where. 'Tis no use asking, nor thinking. Tain't no bisness of mine, I suppose. Nor no one's else's, most like. A' comes and a' goes just when a's a mind to."

"You've known him a many years, Mr. Thacker?"

"Ever since a' was a clytenish (pale) chit of a child. And I knew a's vather avore un. Times was different then. But 'tis no use talking. If Farmer Orme's got a few taters he could spare me, there, I'd be grateful. Mine be uncommon poorish, somehow, to be sure. We be all in a caddle. The old ooman's had with a cough. She took a chill and it pitched, I'm thinking. I be getting these snails for her."

"Snails?"

"Ees; bile 'em in barley water, drink 'em up hot, and they'll cure most any mortal thing."

With this I left old Thacker. I had rarely found him in so amiable and communicative a mood.

#### CHAPTER IX. A STRANGER.

It seemed clear that I had seen the last of Lord Overbury, and that my adventures at the Dark Tower had come to a somewhat tame and prosaic conclusion. It was disappointing, certainly.

As, returned home, I entered the kitchen, I was surprised by the spectacle of a strange figure seated comfortably beside the fire. Faces one had not seen many times before were rare at Purrington, rarer still at the Down Farm, and in such wise to be considered with fixed attention, even with a measure of awe. And the face and figure before me were not only new to me, but presented characteristics that verged on eccentricity.

I turned to Kem for an explanation. I did not speak, but I was conscious that my open eyes and mouth and startled attitude had all the effect of intense interrogation.

"An accident," said Kem. "The——" she hesitated, I know, as to how she should describe the stranger; "gentleman" seemed not wholly appropriate; she hit upon a pleasant compromise: "The good man has hurt himself."

"That sounds suicidal," he interposed. "Rather I have been hurt by a ploughshare, I am told, left upon the down. I had missed my way. Night had fallen. Your roads here are somewhat indistinct. Sheep tracks they might almost be called. Not being a sheep I was unfamiliar with them, and their nature. I have heard a

phrase as to the cutting of sticks applied to the movements of man's lower limbs. I did not think how literally it might refer to my own legs; let me be correct—to one of them. I was cut on the shin—a tender part as you may be aware—by what, I am given to understand, was a plough-share."

"It was that gawney Josh Hedges as left un there, I'll warnd (warrant)," said Kem.

"Anyhow it wounded my shin; not severely, perhaps, but sufficiently," continued the stranger. "I fell. I think I fainted. I remained upon the down throughout the night. In point of fact my lodging was upon the cold ground; I will add, and damp. I have known snugger and less draughty abodes. The bosom of Mother Earth is a trifle deficient in natural warmth. I was found by some labouring folks—tillers of the soil? happy peasantry? just so. They brought me here. I have received kindly attention and succour. Such is my brief story. You will, I am sure, under all the peculiar circumstances of the case, excuse my rising."

I then perceived that his left foot was bare, resting upon the kitchen fender. He had been bathing his wound, which looked rather an ugly one.

"Your mother," he said, half inquiringly, but he did not wait for an answer; "just so, I had judged as much—has kindly gone in search of some further medicaments—what is called 'poor man's plaster,' I understand. A very appropriate remedy. For I hate disguise; I am not rich, far from it. Thus aided, I don't doubt that I shall do very well." He bowed to me as he lifted to his lips a tumbler of hot brandy-and-water.

There was a certain oddness about his air and speech that struck me much. He was perfectly grave, and yet there was a suspicion of comicality underlying all he said and did. Upon my entrance he seemed to have discerned in me a sympathetic auditor, and had addressed to me all his observations, and kept his eyes fixed upon me. He had a deep fruity kind of voice, and spoke with a deliberation that was almost laboured, as though he prided himself upon the distinctness of his articulation. And as he spoke he moved his eyebrows actively, and waved his hand to and fro in the air. He seemed to gather from my looks replies to his inquiries, nodding his head approvingly, and at intervals permitting a dignified smile to flit across his lips. He had a large, round, fleshy face without

whiskers; his hair, dark, curly, and profuse, was piled up high above his head, falling upon his brow like a plume. As I noted this he made a circular movement with his arm and passed his fingers through his locks, carelessly lifting them to a greater elevation. He smiled at me as he did this, and, I think intentionally, displayed a ring he wore upon his little finger. If the stone set in the ring was genuine, I judged that it must have been, from its exceeding size, of enormous value; but I knew little of jewellery; such opinions as I entertained upon the subject were derived mainly from the histories of Aladdin and Sinbad.

I fear that I stared at the stranger with rude persistency; his aspect somehow fascinated me; I found a difficulty in averting my eyes from him. Not that this seemed in the least to annoy or offend him. I decided, indeed, that he was rather gratified than not by my gaze. He expanded his chest, and leant back majestically in his chair with an air of exhibiting his proportions to the utmost advantage, and justifying my admiration of him, or at least my curiosity concerning him. Suddenly it struck me that he resembled portraits I had seen somewhere—probably on market-days in Steepleborough shop-windows—of King George the Fourth, attired in the clothes of private life.

He was scarcely so large in the girth, however, as his majesty—judging from his effigies—although he was of full habit, and even corpulent; nor was his costume comparable in point of quality and fashion to the dress of the king. His fluffy white beaver hat, bent and battered about the rim, and disfigured by many weather stains and creases, stood beside him upon the kitchen-table. He wore a blue dress-coat of swallow-tail pattern, rather white about the seams, and buttoning with some difficulty, owing to its being a trifle too small for him; some of its bright buttons had evidently yielded to the severe tension they had been subjected to, and altogether disappeared; here and there, especially high up on his chest, their places had been supplied by pins. A rusty black silk kerchief was wound round his neck. His legs were cased in nankeen pantaloons, tight at the ankle, but bulging freely, from long use, at the knees. A soiled green ribbon with a copper seal and watch-key—at least, I was convinced that they were not gold—depended from his fob. Dingy stockings and very thin shoes—that had not recently undergone blacking, and certainly needed repair—completed his attire. Beneath his

chair there rested a small bundle tied up in a faded cotton handkerchief knotted at the corners, and attached to a rough walking-stick, which looked as though it had been drawn from a hurdle.

I felt that I had been staring at the stranger quite long enough; still I could not depart from his presence. I had never before seen such a man, or such a method of dress. But I now changed my position, and for awhile studied the movements of Kem and the condition of the kitchen fire. Every now and then, however, I indulged in a furtive glance at the stranger. When I did so, I found him still looking at me. Our eyes met. It was certainly awkward. And then my curiosity was newly stimulated. He had produced from his pocket a pair of scissors and a scrap of paper. And, while still looking at me, he was snipping at this paper, holding it up to the light, then snipping it again, after further gaze at me. He was a most extraordinary man. He had already been too much for Kem. She was stricken dumb, and, as she wildly pared potatoes, her face wore almost an insane expression.

"I call that a fair portrait," said the stranger, and he held up a black shade of myself, placed against a white card for its better exhibition. He had been cutting out my silhouette. Kem was roused from apathy, and as soon as her amazement permitted her speech, she pronounced the portrait perfect, said she should have known it anywhere, and evidently formed forthwith a more favourable opinion of our visitor than she had previously entertained. I felt that the black shade resembled me, though I was but indifferently acquainted with the conformation of my own profile. Still it exhibited a boy with a blunt nose, a sharp chin, a mass of thick untidy hair, and a patch of white to represent my collar. It was clearly my likeness.

"You're an artist, sir," I said, diffidently. "I may call myself an artist," he answered, with a grand yet not unkindly air. "I really think I may. Not that this trifling is really to be called art. You like the trifle?—keep it, my young friend. Keep it, my friend, in memory of me. A touch of gum or paste will make it adhere to the card. Stick it up over your mantelshelf. Tell your friends, should they inquire, that it is the work and the gift of Fane Mauleverer. A trifle, yet of worth in its way. I've known worse portraits executed by artists of greater pretence. But I am in the habit of speaking modestly—if at all—of my own merits."

I was deeply gratified; I tendered him warm if incoherent thanks, which he received with bland and smiling deprecation. I was even emboldened, boy-like, to intrude further upon his generosity, and begged further demonstration of his artistic endowments.

"Now do Kem's likeness; please, do," I pleaded. His kindness had banished my timidity.

"I'm ashamed of you, Master Duke," said Kem, the natural crimson of her face deepening greatly. She objected to being portrayed. She had even some superstitious apprehension, I think, that evil would come of it. She covered her face with her apron.

But the stranger—Mr. Fane Mauleverer as he had announced his name—with an amused expression, snipped a fresh scrap of paper, and not in the least deterred by her movements and objection, achieved a silhouette of Kem. I thought it wonderfully like—much better than my own, indeed, of which, perhaps, I was not so good a judge. Her cap strings and frills were beyond praise.

"By special desire," said Mr. Mauleverer, exhibiting his work, "of the young gentleman whose name I gather to be Duke, a portrait of the exemplary lady whom I have heard designated Kem—a curious appellation; but no matter. Here is Fane Mauleverer's tribute to the personal advantages of Mistress Kem."

My mother entered the kitchen. She was much distressed at the mischance that had befallen Mr. Mauleverer. She was about to apply her healing arts to his wound; the matrons of her time were practised in domestic medicine, and she had long been consulted upon all accidents happening upon the farm. But Mr. Mauleverer, with exceeding politeness, declined her aid. He could not permit, he said, that she should attend upon him. And he called her "My dear madam." His manner struck me as quite courtly.

"No, no," he said, "I am not the Chevalier Bayard." It occurred to me that he did not resemble greatly my idea of that chivalric personage. "And my wound is but slight, and not received in combat, but ignobly, by wandering from my path, and tumbling over a useful, if graceless, agricultural appliance. A strip or two of plaster—so"—as he spoke he warmed the plaster at the fire, and then applied it to his hurt—"and then, I am myself again. I may limp for a day or two. But what matter? I can yet proceed upon my way."



"You were going to——"

"To Lockport. I had left Dripford in the morning. My trunks, I may mention," here Mr. Mauleverer looked very grave and cleared his throat, "have been sent on before me. I was told that Lockport was a walk of some twelve miles."

"Across the down."

"True. Across the down. But a stranger to these parts—I was never before, indeed, in this delightfully open country—I missed my road. It was not surprising, perhaps. Nor could I obtain directions. One meets but few people hereabouts; habitations are scarce, and sign-posts are not frequent when once the highway has been quitted. But now, rested and refreshed—thanks to your kind hospitality—and my trifling injury seen to, I think I may safely proceed."

He rose, and took his fluffy white hat from the table.

"It were best for you to remain," said my mother. "A night's rest, Mr.——" she paused.

"Mauleverer—Fane Mauleverer," he said, bowing over his hat which he pressed against his chest.

"We have a room at your service, Mr. Mauleverer. All shall be done for your comfort. It is not right that you should set forth so soon—night will soon come on—and your hurt is too serious for you to think of walking so great a distance."

"Madam, you overpower me. But—let me disclose myself. You may entertain mistaken notions in regard to me. I am an actor, madam. Nothing more. A poor player on my way to Lockport, having an engagement there during the race-week. I have trod the boards of Covent Garden. But I am now, at your service, a strolling player—that is the world's description of me. I am content to accept it as sufficiently accurate."

### FAMOUS BRITISH REGIMENTS.

#### THE FIFTH FOOT ("THE FIGHTING FIFTH.")

THERE is an old military tradition that the Fifth won from the French the feathers which they now wear, and that they dyed their tops red by dipping them in the blood of their enemies. The true story, however, is this. The "Old Bold Fifth" had the distinction of wearing a white plume in the cap, when the similar ornament in the other regiments of the service was a red and white tuft. This honourable distinction was given to them for their conduct at Morne Fortune, in the island of St. Lucia, where they took from

the French grenadiers white feathers in sufficient numbers to equip every man in the regiment. This distinction was subsequently confirmed by authority, and continued as a distinctive decoration until 1829, when a general order caused the white feather to be worn by the whole army. By a letter from Sir H. Taylor, adjutant-general, dated July, 1829, the commander-in-chief, referring to the newly-issued order, by which the special distinction was lost to the regiment, states that, "As an equivalent, the Fifth shall in future wear a feather half red and half white, the red uppermost, instead of the plain white feather worn by the rest of the army, as a peculiar mark of honour."

The Fifth Regiment of Foot (or Northumberland Fusiliers) originated in a body of disbanded Irish soldiers, who, on the peace with Holland, in 1674, were allowed to enter the Dutch service. It had been intended to raise ten thousand men, and place them under the chief command of the Prince of Orange. Sir Walter Vane was to have been their leader, but he being killed at the battle of Seneffe, the command was handed over to Sir William Ballandyne, who was shot the same year at the siege of Grave, in North Brabant. Colonel John Fenwick then took up the dead man's sword, and led on the "Irish" regiment to many Dutch victories. At the great but unsuccessful siege of Maestricht, which was defended by Mousieur Calvo, a brave Catalan, and eight thousand men, the English brigade distinguished themselves by repelling several hot sallies, and capturing, after two bloody assaults, the Dauphin Bastion, for which the Prince of Orange complimented the Irish corps, and rewarded the men with a special present of a fat ox and six sheep to each regiment. In this siege, raised at last by Marshal Schomberg and a French army, the English brigade had nearly half its officers and men killed or wounded.

At the defeat of the Prince of Orange at Mont-Cassel in 1677, the Irish brigade behaved with its usual indomitable spirit. In 1678, under the command of the Earl of Ossory, the regiment fought in the Netherlands, and is particularly mentioned on one occasion as encamping near Waterloo; while at the battle of St. Denis, the British brigade was chosen to lead the attack on the French. The regiment lost on this occasion about a dozen officers, eighty men killed, and one hundred wounded. The peace of Nimeguen



soon followed, and for a time the brave brigade hung up their ponderous muskets.

On the accession of James the Second, the rebellions in Scotland and England compelled the return of the English and Irish regiments. They arrived too late to be useful at Sedgemoor, and sailed back at once to Holland, from whence, in 1687, they refused again to return at the king's command. The prince then bestowed the colonelcy of the subsequent Fifth on Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Tollemache. Captain Bernardi, of this regiment, was afterwards implicated in a plot to assassinate King William; and, though never tried, was cruelly detained in prison by that usually just king for thirty years.

When the Prince of Orange started for the English throne in 1688, Tollemache's regiment was the flower of the five thousand five hundred men who left Holland, and it at once obtained rank as Fifth Regiment of Foot in the British line. They were soon busy in Ireland, fought at the Boyne and the siege of Athlone, and cut to pieces many troublesome packs of Rapparees. At Athlone the grenadier company of the Fifth, under Major-General Mackay, waded breast high through the Shannon, the reserve following by planks laid over the broken arches of a stone bridge. The regiment afterwards joined actively in the siege of Limerick, and the conquest of that place terminated the war in Ireland.

It is a noteworthy fact that in 1694, during William's wars in Flanders, the Fifth were again encamped near Waterloo, and they also helped to protect Ghent and Bruges, in 1696, from the French. In Queen Anne's wars they also had hard work cut out for them. In the war of the Spanish succession they fought a good deal in Portugal; and at Campo Mayor, when the Portuguese cavalry fled, and three of our regiments, advancing too far unsupported, were surrounded and taken prisoners, the Fifth and two other regiments made a stubborn stand, killing nearly a thousand Spaniards and effecting a brave and glorious retreat with a loss of only one hundred and fifty men killed and wounded. After this Portuguese campaign, the Fifth (five hundred strong) went to garrison Gibraltar, and remained there fifteen years. In 1726, they helped vigorously to defend the tough old rock against the Spaniards.

In 1728, the Fifth proceeded to Ireland, where it remained, with but a short interval, for more than twenty years. In 1755 it left Ireland, and in 1758 was sent to effect a landing on the coast of France, when it

helped to burn the shipping and magazines at St. Malo. In August of the same year it helped to destroy the fort of Cherbourg, and to capture and destroy one hundred and eighty-five cannon, and, the month after, it was sent to land in Brittany and destroy batteries.

In 1760, the Fifth fought under the Duke of Brunswick in Hesse Cassel. In 1761, as part of the Marquis of Granby's corps, the Fifth defended the heights of Kirch-Denkern, and helped to take prisoners the whole Rouge regiment, with its cannon and colours. When Prince Frederick surprised the French camp at Groebenstein, the Fifth attacked Starville, who had thrown his division into the woods of Wilhelmsthal, to cover the French retreat. The Fifth wormed through the woods, firing from tree to tree, while the Marquis of Granby attacked the French rear to prevent the retreat. The Fifth took more than twice its own number prisoners, and finally helped to capture the whole French division, except two battalions. An officer of the Fifth, who went up to take the French colours from the standard-bearer, was shot dead by a French sergeant, who stood near; but the man was instantly killed, and the colours quickly seized. The Fifth earned so much credit for this dashing exploit, that the men were allowed for the future to wear French fusilier caps, instead of the hat then used by the regiments of the line; and in 1836, William the Fourth allowed the regiment to bear the word "Wilhelmsthal" on their colours and appointments.

From 1764 to 1774 the regiment remained in Ireland, where, from the cleanliness and trimness of the men, the soldiers of the Fighting Fifth became known as "the Shiners." Early in 1767, orders of merit were instituted in this regiment with great success, as they served to insure good non-commissioned officers, and to rouse the ambition of the privates. The first (seven years' good conduct) earned a gilt medal, bearing on one side the badge of the regiment, "Saint George and the Dragon," with the regimental motto, "Quo Fata vocant," and on the reverse, "V<sup>th</sup> Foot, merit;" the second medal (fourteen years' merit) was of silver; the third, also silver (twenty-one years), bore the name of the wearer. Those who gained the twenty-one years' medal had an oval badge of the colour of the facings (green) on the right breast, surrounded with gold and silver wreaths, and inscribed in the centre with the word "merit," in gold letters.

The Fifth, in 1771 and 1772, served in Ireland against the wild bands of Whiteboys, Hearts of Steel, and Hearts of Oak, and in 1774 went to put down the so-called rebellion in America. They fired the first shot of the unfortunate war at Lexington, where they came on some armed American militiamen, and were nearly surrounded at Concord, where they had destroyed some military stores collected there by the so-called rebels. In the attack on Bunker's Hill, near Boston, the Fifth had hot work for a June day. With three days' provision on their back, cartouch-box, &c., weighing one hundred and twenty-five pounds, they toiled through grass reaching to their knees, between walls and fences, in the face of a hot fire, and eventually got possession of the enemy's works on the hill near Charlestown. The Fifth also joined in the reduction of Long Island, the battle of White Plains, the capture of Fort Washington, the reduction of New Jersey, and a fight at Germantown, where they rescued the Fortieth regiment from an American brigade.

In the expedition against the French West Indian Islands in 1778, the Fifth took part. It was at St. Lucia, as we have already seen, that the regiment won its white plumes, helping to repulse three determined rushes of seven thousand French sent to save the island. The French lost four hundred killed, and eleven hundred wounded, while the English lost only eighteen men, and one hundred and thirty wounded—a disparity that seems almost incredible.

In 1787, the regiment embarked for Canada, and in 1796 was employed against the insurgent Canadians at Point Levi, and crossed the St. Lawrence on the ice. In 1797, the officers and sergeants returned to England, and re-formed the regiment by recruiting in Lincolnshire. A kindly feeling was from that time established between the Fifth and Lincolnshire people, that still brings many recruits annually to the regiment from that county.

After serving in the Duke of York's remarkable campaign in Holland in 1799, the Fifth went for two years to Gibraltar, returning at the peace of Amiens. In 1806, the regiment had its share of the mortifying defeat at Buenos Ayres—a defeat which the Fifth did its best to prevent. After entering the treacherous town our soldiers found themselves in a hive of riflemen.

"However, cheered by hope," writes one of the Fifth, "we assembled in a yard, where our brave major proposed an attack

on a place of no less importance than the market-square, but which, by the assiduity of the enemy, had been transformed into a species of citadel. Our gallant and high-spirited officers fully coincided with the major's views. We had a sergeant with us, George Golland, who, I verily believe, would have sabred the first man showing symptoms of what he never felt—fear. Such was our enthusiastic confidence in our leader, that when, sword in hand, he exclaimed, 'Now, my brave fellows, death or victory,' onward we went, and on turning the first angle to the left, found ourselves in the street leading to the market-place. Here we were exposed to a galling fire, which, though it thinned the numbers of our little band, did not impede our progress nor damp our ardour till we came to the square at the end of the street. Here a close, compact, and well-connected fire, wounding several of our officers and men, among whom was our noble major, compelled us to retreat; and it was fortunate that we were able to effect it. . . . We, however, managed to bring our wounded to a church, converted into a hospital, where they were put under the care of medical officers, protected by a sergeant's guard, of whom, by turn of duty, I made one. Sergeant Prior, of Captain Clarke's company, and Corporal Byron, were the non-commissioned officers. Soon after the regiment was gone, some of the twelve men left on guard went into a wine store close by, and two of them, from want of food and excitement, soon became intoxicated, and on attempting to cross the street to return to us were shot dead. To prevent a similar disaster the sergeant directed a sentry to be placed at the door of the wine house; and he, too, soon shared the fate of his comrades from the fire of a concealed enemy. The sergeant then took his station there; in a few seconds he also was a corpse. Night approaching, Byron and the rest of us began to think that our post was not tenable. We shuddered at the idea of leaving the wounded, and came to the resolution that one of us should endeavour to find the regiment and procure assistance. It was a dangerous adventure; we cast lots; and the chance fell upon me. With piece loaded and bayonet fixed I ventured down the street, cleared it, and with but one interruption succeeded in making my way until 'Who comes there' announced that immediate danger was over. I found Colonel Davie, with whom were Majors King and Watt, and most of the officers, and explained to them my

mission. The colonel replied, 'It is too late; the guard is disposed of; join your company.' I did so, and to my utter astonishment learned the issue of the day's adventure, namely, that the light brigade, with Colonel Crawford, were prisoners; this included our light, or Captain G. B. Way's company; Captain Hamilton had lost a leg."

The uniform of the regiment in 1804, was a long-tailed coat, white pantaloons, and Hessian boots; with hair tied and powdered, and a cocked hat. This was the dress of the officers, to which that of the staff-sergeants bore an affinity in the hat and silver-laced coats. The dress of the men when on fatigue was perfectly white, except their stocks, queues, and shoes; but when they were dressed for parade, their coats were frog-laced, with facings of gosling green, white breeches with gaiters, the hair being tied, and well whitened with flour!

In the summer of 1808, the first battalion, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel John Mackenzie, sailed for Portugal to join the army of Lieutenant-General Wellesley. It climbed the rocks of Roleia, gallantly fought at Vimiera, and shared in the disastrous retreat of Corunna. A sergeant of the Fifth, who was present at Roleia, has left a pleasant picture of the gallant clamber up to the French. "Our staff officers," he says, "soon discovered certain chasms or openings made, it should seem, by the rains, up which we were led. As soon as we began the ascent, Colonel Mackenzie, who was riding on a noble grey, dismounted, turned the animal adrift, and, sword in hand, conducted us onwards until we gained the summit of the first hill, the enemy playing upon us all the time. Having gained the crest, we rushed on them in a charge; whoever opposed us fell by the ball or bayonet. We then proceeded towards another hill, where the enemy had formed again; but as our route lay through vineyards, we were annoyed by a destructive fire."

At Vimiera a curious artifice was resorted to by the Fifth to get into the battle. "Our situation," says one of the Fifth, "was on the slope of an eminence; we saw our people promptly advance against the enemy's masses, which were formed in column, and with which they boldly attempted to break the British lines. The attempt was vain, although they were ably assisted by their ordnance and howitzers, from the latter of which we saw the balls rise high in the air, and after describing

many segments of a circle, generally fall between our people who were advancing and ourselves. Dense smoke soon after enveloped the belligerents. It was then we found our situation irksome, many of our officers, too high-spirited to be thus shut out of the glowing scene, actually left us, and ran into the battle. Those who remained contrived a scheme for the chance of following them. We heard our bugles sound the charge; we heard, or fancied we heard, the enemy's fire growing stronger, when from the right of us idlers arose the cry, "The colonel is shot!" His lady hearing this rushed through every restraint down the hill, which was an excuse for many of our men to follow in protection. A few pieces pointed at them from our pickets, frustrated this *ruse de guerre*, for happily it was only a ruse to get into the *mêlée*, the colonel not being even wounded. Towards the end of the day, the scene of action having receded, we were directed to advance, when, coming up with the regiment, we had the pleasure of seeing the enemy in full and unequivocal retreat."

An eye-witness of the bravery of the Fifth at Salamanca says, "The light brigade—the light infantry companies of each division—were soon entering into a defile in our front, at about a mile distant. These were followed by some cavalry. Firing soon commenced. The troops stood to their arms; they advanced; we were soon within range, when each particular regiment, as its flank became uncovered, deployed into line, and advanced to the attack. A few minutes before this, Sergeants Taylor, Stock, Benson, Bernard, Green, Watson, and myself, were ordered to the centre, where we found Ensign James B. Hamilton and another, who bore the colours. The shock of the onset had passed over, the men expeditiously firing, and gradually gaining ground. We were going up an ascent on whose crest masses of the enemy were stationed; their fire seemed capable of sweeping everything before it; still we advanced; the fire became stronger—there was a pause—a hesitation. Here I blush; but I should blush more if I were guilty of a falsehood. Truth compels me to say, therefore, that we retired before this overwhelming fire, but slowly, in good order, not far; not a hundred paces. Sergeants Stock and Taylor were already killed, when General Pakenham approached, and very good-naturedly said, 'Re-form,' and in about a moment 'Advance,' adding, 'There they are, my lads,

just let them feel the temper of your bayonets.' We advanced, every one making up his mind for mischief. Proceeding rather slowly at first, the regiment of dragoons, which had retired with us, again accompanying us, at last we brought our pieces to the trail, the fire still as brisk as before, when the bugles along the line sounded the charge. Forward we rushed; the scene was soon closed, and awful was the retribution we exacted for our former repulse. . . Just after, Ensign Hamilton was wounded; we had lost Sergeant Watson and another; so to prevent the colours falling, the officers being wounded at nearly the same instant, Sergeant Green and myself had the honour of bearing both colours for upwards of an hour, a circumstance which served as a pretext for throwing away my pike, a useless piece of military furniture. We continued to gain ground on the enemy until we arrived at the crest of a hill crowned by our own artillery, which was acting against that of the enemy on an opposite ridge, a valley being between them. On arriving with the artillery we paused for breath, when we were commanded to clear the hill on which the enemy's guns were planted. This required celerity of movement; we ran down our hill exposed to the enemy's fire, as well as for part of the distance to that of our own. Complete success crowned our efforts; the enemy, routed, left their guns, when the line, an extensive one, composed of several regiments, halted. Night advancing, little more than a desultory fire was maintained, and soon after, it being known that some of the commissariat had arrived close in the rear, I was ordered to take a sergeant of the company, and draw spirits for the regiment. I went, the adjutant accompanying me, when, having staved in the head, I was so completely overpowered with thirst, that I drank very nearly a pint of rum without feeling its strength. Returning to my station in the centre, I learnt the result of this well-fought battle."

In the Indian campaign, the Fifth fully earned the blazon of "Lucknow" that still adorns their flag. In the full head of an Indian summer they faced the matchlock fire of the white-capped Sepoys, and the sabres of the rebel sowars; and many a blood-stained "budmash" fell by their fierce bayonets. The records of the Victoria Cross contain the names of several heroes of the Fifth, as the following extracts prove:

"Fifth Regiment.—Sergeant Robert

Grant. For conspicuous devotion at Alumbagh, on the 24th of September, 1857, in proceeding under a heavy and galling fire to save the life of Private E. Deveney, whose leg had been shot away, and eventually carrying him safe into camp with the assistance of the late Lieutenant Browne and some comrades.—Private Peter M'Manus. A party, on the 26th of September, 1857, was shut up and besieged in a house in the city of Lucknow by the rebel Sepoys. Private M'Manus kept outside the house till he himself was wounded, and, under cover of a pillar, kept firing at the Sepoys, and prevented their rushing on the house. He also, in conjunction with Private John Ryan, rushed into the street and took Captain Arnold, of the First Madras Fusiliers, out of a dhooly, and brought him into the house in spite of a heavy fire, in which that officer was again wounded.—Private Patrick M'Hale. For conspicuous bravery at Lucknow on the 2nd of October, 1857, when he was the first man at the capture of one of the guns at the Cawnpore battery; and again, on the 22nd of December, 1857, when, by a bold rush, he was the first to take possession of one of the enemy's guns, which had sent several rounds through his company, which was skirmishing up to it. On every occasion of attack, Private M'Hale was the first to meet the foe, amongst whom he caused such consternation by the boldness of his rush, as to leave little work for those who followed in his support. By his habitual coolness and daring, and sustained bravery in action, his name became a household word for gallantry among his comrades."

Most true English soldiers are ready to go where the trumpet calls, "Quo Fata vocant;" but the Fates, as we have pretty clearly shown, have called few regiments to hotter places than the Fifth, and few regiments have obeyed the call with more joyous alacrity.

#### REMEMBERED.

ONLY a great green meadow, with an old oak-tree in the hedge,  
Where the brambles were first to ripen, the sparrow  
was first to fledge;  
Only a broad brown river that swept between willow  
ranks,  
Where the tansy tangled the bindweed fair that graced  
the sandy banks.  
Just the meadow, and the river, and a lane that joined  
the two,  
And a marsh where marigold glistened, by forget-me-  
nots' virgin blue,



With the purple hills for a background, and a lark that  
always sang.  
Till the bright keen air around it with the melody  
trilled and rang.

It is thirty weary years ago. Through many a lovely  
scene,  
Through many a fair and storied haunt my tired steps  
have been,

Yet, whenever from life and its lessons I turn, a sup-  
pliant guest,  
To the land where memory shrines for us beauty and  
joy and rest.

I know the scent of the tansy, crushed 'neath an eager  
tread,

I know the note of the skylark as it soared from its  
lowly bed,

I see the oak-tree's mighty boughs, I hear the willows  
shiver,

I see the blue forget-me-nots that grew by the northern  
river.

Fancies have failed and hopes have fled, and the prize  
but mocks the strife,

Death and Sorrow with busy hands have altered the  
course of life,

But as fair and fresh as when down its path the fearless  
footstep sprang,

Is the meadow beside the broad brown stream I loved  
when all was young.

### MODERN ROMAN MOSAICS.

#### A ROMAN HAMPSTEAD.

HILLS, donkeys, plenty to eat and drink,  
and a whole Sunday to enjoy them in!  
Here be materials for a cockney holiday,  
or I have never been within sound of Bow  
bells! But—there are hills and hills,  
donkeys and donkeys, food and food; one  
must discriminate.

Dear old Hampstead, I am not going to  
say a word against thee. Let those who  
have no eyes to see, and no soul to enjoy  
the wonderful view from Hampstead Hill  
when the summer sun is setting; and who  
have no fibre of sympathy with the holiday-  
making toilers and moilers who trudge out,  
men, women, and children, to gratify their  
intensely English longing for a glimpse of  
rurality—let such fine folks, I say, turn up  
their honourable noses at the humble enjoy-  
ments of the Londoner's familiar 'Amstead  
'Eath, and search in their foreign guide-  
books for leave to admire "by authority."  
Not of such am I, nor would I be. Far  
be it from me to disparage thee, oh, thou  
donkey-traversed Arabia Felix of my child-  
hood! But still, as I began by observing,  
there are hills and hills, and one must dis-  
criminate.

The holiday resort which we are to visit  
on this bright Sunday at the end of March,  
is a little townlet on a spur of the Alban  
Mountains, and the great city which it looks  
at from its terraces and windows, is called  
Rome.

To begin at the beginning—which is "a

good plain way," as the old-fashioned  
cookery-books say—we start from the  
Roman railway station close by the huge  
pile of ruins known as the Baths of Diocle-  
tian, at half-past seven o'clock on a de-  
licious spring morning.

Our fellow-travellers are not very nu-  
merous. The hour is too early for  
the majority of citizen holiday-makers.  
There are several parties of sportsmen  
armed with guns for the slaughter of small  
birds, and attended by a dog in a leash,  
usually of a currish aspect. There are five  
or six shop-boys in a chattering group,  
dressed like the wax figures in a cheap  
clothier's window, and assuming great airs  
of fashion and dandyism. There are a few  
officers in uniform, a priest or two, and  
some peasant women with empty baskets.  
These latter have, doubtless, been selling  
garden produce in the capital, and are re-  
turning to their homes to pass the festa  
day.

In Rome most things have a character  
of their own. We live and move on a mere  
crust of nineteenth century, but im-  
mediately beneath it lies the solid foundation  
of some two thousand and odd years ago.  
And one has but to scratch the soil a very  
little, to scrape away every vestige of "to-  
day," and come to the abiding traces of the  
ancient Latins. Nay, in many places their  
works still tower by the head and shoulders  
above the soil; although Time toils cease-  
lessly to heap the earth over them, and  
bury them where they stand. The steam-  
horse puffs and clatters along through a  
breach in the city wall, past the ruins of a  
great temple, said to have been dedicated  
to Minerva Medica (or as a modern Roman  
might style the divinity, Madonna della  
Salute, Our Lady of Healing), past the  
tall arches of hoary aqueducts, past mounds  
of immemorial antiquity, and crumbling  
tombs, which have survived for so many  
centuries the memory of their builders and  
occupants. The grass is brightly green  
with the fresh life of the early year.  
White daisies cluster, by thousands and  
hundreds of thousands, over the meadows of  
the Campagna. Sheep are grazing peace-  
fully, and do not turn their gentle, silly  
heads as the train whirls noisily past them.  
Some great huge-horned oxen lie resting  
with their dove-coloured sides half buried  
in the herbage, and their jaws moving  
with slow and regular motion as they chew  
the cud and stare at us contemplatively.  
Birds are twittering and piping cheerfully,  
restless and swift of wing. Out yonder in

the distance rise the shadowy blue mountains, whither we are speeding along the iron way.

A journey of little over half an hour brings us to the station of Frascati, which is about a mile from the town, and three or four hundred feet below it. All around us are dusky olives, and young vines, and peach-trees in full bloom. How exquisitely the vivid delicate colour of the peach-blossom contrasts with the chocolate-brown of the ploughed earth, the purplish tint of the still leafless branches, and the green-grey of the olives! But there is no time now to stop and contemplate the beauties of nature. A crowd of men and boys driving a great variety of vehicles, and saddled donkeys, make competing offers for the honour of conveying us to Frascati. We jump into a high gig drawn by a short, fat, black pony; the driver perches himself partly on our knees, and partly on the outer edge of the little vehicle, and off we jingle up the paved road among the olive plantations.

Frascati has a large open piazza, and an ugly big cathedral—built at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and a good specimen of the tastelessness of the period—an inn, a fountain, some tolerable private houses, and a labyrinth of evil-smelling back slums. And of course there is the indispensable café with tables and benches in front of the door, and spindly oleanders in tubs. The piazza is full. Men stand, and lounge, and smoke, and chat, or remain with their hands in their pockets, simply enjoying in its literal significance the *dolce far niente*. The church is full, chiefly of women and children; the trattoria (eating-house) is full; worst of all, the inn is full.

"Beds? Nossignore! not a bed vacant in the house! But we will find you quarters in a private dwelling, and you can eat in the hotel. Non dubiti, don't be afraid, you'll do very well."

We do find an apartment in the house of the hairdresser (I apologise to the other capillary artists, if there be any other in Frascati, but truly I believe our host was *the* hairdresser), where we deposit our travelling-bags, and then proceed to bargain for donkeys and a guide to convoy us to the sights in the immediate neighbourhood. Villas there are to be seen, and a great Jesuit monastery and school, and above all, Tuscolum! Tuscolum the ancient, ruined, fortress-city, and the villa, so-called, of Cicero, scene of the Tusculan disputations.

This is a cockney excursion, and we are not going to be learned, and instructive, and guide-bookish. But let us be never so humdrum, and of the city citified, the fact remains that we are treading on classic ground, and cannot make a step without arousing some echoes of the wonderful and mighty past.

Nevertheless, our Roman Hampstead has its banalités and vulgarities. You are told to visit this villa, and that villa, and to admire their painted ceilings, and water-works, and marbles, and views. These latter are, in truth, superb; being unspoilable by any combination of money and bad taste. But of the rest, the less said the better. The Aldobrandini Villa, the most celebrated of these, is finely situated, and has some noble trees in its grounds, and an abundance of clear delicious water. The beauty of the water is, however, greatly marred by the hideous artificial cascade down which it is made to pour, in the centre of what the guide-books call "a fine hemicycle with two wings." The "hemicycle" is a crescent-shaped stone arcade, of about as much architectural beauty as the arcade yept of Lowther in the Strand. Once upon a time the water was made to turn an organ, and perform other fantastic tricks; but fortunately the works have fallen out of repair, and we are spared having to waste our time on that spectacle. This it is, though, and such as this, that our guide chiefly insists on our admiring; after the manner of guides everywhere, indeed.

But I beg you particularly not to run away with the idea suggested by that last phrase, that our guide was an ordinary guide. In some respects, no doubt, he shared the usual characteristics of his tribe; but his grand speciality and charm consisted in an amount of jealous and defiant self-sufficiency which I have never seen equalled. There are several categories of persons who are popularly supposed to be specially autocratic, and whose ipse dixit assumes an air of infallible authority; of such are French cooks, Scotch gardeners, and schoolmasters generally. But compared with our Frascatican cicerone—pooh, pooh, these all dwindle into modest insignificance. Our man's conceit reaches the border-land of sanity.

"Ou la vanité va-t-elle se nicher?" Look at the poor old fellow. He is miserably clad, not too abundantly fed, ignorant with the dense and stolid ignorance of a Roman peasant born within view of St. Peter's

more than half a century ago. And yet his faith in his own wisdom and acquirements is evidently all-sufficing to him. He has got himself up for Sunday in a singular manner. He has treated himself as if he were a fragment of ancient statuary, and consisted entirely of torso, his head and extremities being ignored altogether. His face would be almost the dirtiest object I have ever seen, were it not that his hat is dirtier. But around his throat is a white shirt-collar, a glimpse of clean linen is afforded by his widely open waistcoat, and his coat has been brushed on the shoulders, and down to a little below the waist. Beyond these points no effort at embellishment has been made, either in an upward or downward direction. His boots look as if they were constructed of sun-dried mud, like an Irish cabin; and his hands appear to have been recently used as spades in the cultivation of some rich soil.

Early in the proceedings his wrathful suspicions are excited by the production from the pocket of one of our party of the well-known red guide-book so familiar in the hands of travelling Englishmen. Our cicerone eyes it askance. He evidently considers Murray as his natural enemy. "H'm," he grunts out, with his bright black eyes fixed scornfully on the red volume, "Ah, ecco! The guide-book. Well, I have told you what there is to see here, haven't I? Ha! The book. Yes; oh yes. To be sure. I know it." Then with a sudden change of manner, raising his voice to a tragic pitch, "I know more than the book! I know more than the travellers!! I know more than anybody!!! What, I have been cicerone here for forty years—more than forty years—and I don't know better than the book? Che! There is the Campagna, there is Rome, there is the Villa Ruffinella, Mondragone, Camaldoli, Mont' Oreste, the railway, Tivoli, Monte Porzio," rattling out the names in a breathless jumble, and turning round as on a pivot, with outstretched arm, and pointing finger, "don't I know them? Are they in the book? Well, didn't I tell you beforehand? Che! I know better than the book. I know better than anybody!"

Throughout the excursion we have to be on the watch lest his susceptibilities should take alarm at our appearing to know anything before he tells it to us. On his first introduction to us by his master, the owner of the donkeys, he slapped his breast, and announced that he spoke "all languages."

"Inglese, francese, italiano—tutte le lingue!"

"Ah!" exclaimed one of our party, of a sceptical turn of mind, addressing him in Italian, "not much English I fancy, eh?"

"I speak English, yes; but"—with a cunning twinkle in his eyes as he rapidly "took stock" of us to assure himself of our nationality, lest he should tumble into the pitfall of vaunting his knowledge of French to French people—"but—French I speak excellently—excellently! Già, tutte le lingue!"

Notwithstanding our friend's unlimited lingual acquirements, we find it most convenient to carry on our communications with him in Italian: which language, he informs us condescendingly, he will talk with us since we speak it well. The inference, of course, being that had our Italian been a shade or two more barbarous, he would have declined to allow us to converse in it, but would have made use of one or other of "all the other languages" which he knows.

On we go at a gentle pace, mounting the hill, between sweet-smelling hedges of thickly-blossomed laurel, cyclamen, and "May" just bursting into leaf. Wild flowers of many kinds cluster in the grass beneath the hedge-rows, and the violets embalm the air with their delicious odour. Owing to the number of evergreens—laurel, bay, olive, ilex, and stone-pine—the landscape is not leafless, although the deciduous trees are only budding as yet. Presently we pass the iron gate leading to a convent of Franciscan friars, and we meet a Capuchin in his brown serge garb coming down the hill. He is a handsome, middle-aged man, with a black beard and a bright eye. He gives us pleasant greeting, but observes smilingly on seeing that one of our number is on foot, "Aha! You want yet another little donkey. Yes; there is a somarello too few!" I explain that our friend walks well, and prefers to walk. "Aha!" cries the friar again, this time with a puzzled, incredulous look. "He prefers to walk, does he?" And goes on his way down toward Frascati, doubtless adding one more eccentric and incomprehensible Englishman to the list of those whom he has seen pass his convent gates on their way to Tusculum. To walk when one might ride! The thing is not conceivable by an Italian mind of that class.

Our guide avails himself of this oppor-

tunity to display his knowledge. "Un cappuccino," says he in an explanatory manner looking after the friar's retreating figure. "A monk. They are Franciscans in that convent. Oh, I know the monks! I know everything. Ha! There were pictures there—"

"Yes, a sketch by Guido," puts in the sceptic, imprudently interrupting.

The guide pours out the rest of his sentence in a rush, and gives a defiant snort at the end of it.

"Un Guido, un Giulio Romano, un Paolo Brilli" (Paul Brill); "they've all been carried away, away to Rome. Nothing to see there now. I know better than the book. H'mph!"

Prince Lucien Buonaparte at one time occupied the Villa Ruffinella, which lies on our way, and has left there a cockney reminiscence of his taste, the mention of which ought not to be omitted from this sketch of a cockney holiday. There is in the grounds of the villa a gentle slope which the prince christened Parnassus, and on which—to show that it was Parnassus—he planted in box the names of various celebrated authors, ancient and modern. Our old man stops the donkeys at this point, throws himself into an attitude, and exclaims in a sonorous voice, "Ecco il Parnaso!" Which delicious paraphrase of "il Parnasso" would have been somewhat mystifying to us, had we not gleaned some information about it beforehand from the pages of the despised Murray. A little beyond "Il Parnaso" stands by the wayside a weather-beaten, black-nosed, plaster cast on a cracked pedestal. To this work of art the cicerone calls our attention in passing, with the announcement, "Apollo Belvedere!" And adds after an instant, with a sort of careless candour, "Copia!" (a copy). Lest we should be misled into thinking that we saw before us the veritable world-renowned antique:

—the lord of the unerring bow,  
The god of life, and poesy, and light.

Now we emerge on to a high, open down, covered with fragrant turf. There is a flock of sheep on one hand, and on the other—where the ground breaks away rather precipitously—some goats are scrambling among fragments of rock, and grazing on the young shoots of the bushes. A little further and we come upon massive sub-structures, huge ruined walls of brickwork, and vaulted chambers half buried in the earth. This is the so-called Villa of Cicero.

Let us not vex our souls with debating learned pros and cons as to the date and history of these venerable foundations. It is enough to know that the great Roman once dwelt upon this spot, and that his eyes looked out upon the self-same scene which lies beneath our own. And what a scene to contemplate from the study windows of "learned leisure!"

It is even better seen, however, from the superior height of the citadel of Tusculum above it. The Campagna, stretching away with purple shadows and pale green lights, until it is bounded yonder by the silver line of sea flashing beneath the sunshine; Rome in the midst, with the great dome of St. Peter's looming black and shadow-like above her roofs and streets. On either hand the delicately undulating line of hills, every peak of which has an historic name, and in whose dimpled valleys nestle towns, that had had centuries of fame in song and story whilst yet the mighty Anglo-Saxon race was not. At our feet Frascati among her velvet-tufted pine groves. Nearer at hand the remains of a classic theatre, with its rows of semicircular seats for the spectators still perfect, and a green carpet, not of baize, but of grass, upon its stage. Above all a pile of massive hewn stones, sole remnants of the once strong fortress of Tusculum, surmounted by a cross of iron that looks across the vast plain towards its brother on St. Peter's dome, and dominates the heathen ruins as that dominates Rome living and dead. At the base of the pile a colony of triply odorous violets flourishes amidst the spring herbage. So that the violets be but sheltered from the fierceness of the sun, the shape of the shadow that falls on them matters nothing. It is a wondrous scene, and we gaze and gaze in a dream of delight, and awake almost with a start to turn away reluctantly and pursue a downward course towards the plain.

But before we quit Tusculum, let us record the culminating point, the highest height of absurdity—or sublimity, there is but a step, you know, from the one to the other—which our cicerone that day achieved.

There was a lady in our party. She had hitherto been basking in the favour of the Erudite one, partly because she understood Italian well, and partly because, with the wiliness of her sex, she feigned an abject ignorance which his words alone had power to dissipate. But she was doomed to experience a check. The great creature who



acted as our guide knew no paltering weakness, and spared neither sex nor age in his wrath. Said the lady, looking pleasantly upon the patient and sagacious beast that had carried her so well, and had stopped with curious accuracy at all the regulation points of view—said the lady, "How well the donkey knows his way!"

"Non l'avesse mai detto!" as the Italian hath it. Would that she had never uttered those imprudent words. For, with a stern, nay, almost ferocious countenance, the Erudite turned upon her, and exclaimed in a tone of bitter derision, "He know his way? No, I—'tis I who know the way! I know better than he does. He knows nothing. I know better than the book, better than the donkey, better than anybody!"

If the reader be incredulous of the literal accuracy of the above, let him go to Frascati some fine Sunday, take the Erudite one as his guide, and praise the donkey. He will see.

On returning to the little town, we found a throng of holiday-makers in full force. A later train from Rome had brought out a number of the townsfolk and their families. There were foreigners, too, of the non-fine classes; artists dwelling within the territory of Bohemia, tradespeople, humble tourists. There were many Germans who ate and drank with surprising energy, and talked at the full pitch of their not very dulcet voices with an energy more surprising still, filling the inn and the café with what a disdainful old Roman near me called "Una batteria di ja!" A battery of ja's!

We enjoyed our black coffee and cigars after dinner in company with two native gentlemen who were engrossed in a game of draughts. They played on the board belonging to the café, which was so dirty and worn as to render it literally very difficult to discern the white checkers from the black. But the players were intent on their game, and were surrounded by a group of interested spectators. As I watched them bending over the board, their handsome, classic faces—not too clean, but that did not affect the outline—and their heads shaped like hundreds of those of the antique Roman busts, falling away at the back, that is, and making an almost straight line from the nape to the crown, I could not help thinking that the substitution of a little drapery for their stiff modern coats would convert the whole

group into one which might figure on a bas-relief of the best classic period without any apparent anachronism.

And the adjuncts of the scene were not exclusively nineteenth century. By this time the bulk of visitors whom one might denominate generically (*pace Cowper*) as *il Signor Giovanni Gilpino e famiglia*, had returned citywards. The stars were twinkling overhead. The same mountains which Virgil and Augustus looked at were keeping solemn watch and ward upon the horizon. The café with its open unglazed windows, and marble tables and rude benches, and its pots of the Oriental-looking oleander by the door, presented nothing out of harmony with the bygone Latin world. Nothing, at least, which was visible by the soft, dim starlight mixed with pale rays from an oil-lamp, which alone illuminated the space of paved piazza where we sat. It was yet early when we went to bed, having to rise betimes the next morning. But the night was far advanced before we slept. Every Italian city of any note has a distinctive epithet attached to it. There is *Genova la Superba*, *Venezia la Bella*, *Firenze la Gentile*, *Padova la Dotta*, and so forth. If a stranger and a barbarian from beyond the Alps might presume to offer a special affix to the name of the Roman Hampstead, he would suggest that it be henceforth known as *Frascati the Flea-bitten*!

#### EPISTOLARY COURTESIES.

THE courtesies of letter-writing in the various countries of Europe differ almost as much as their languages. Buffon it was who first said that the style is the man. He might have added that the style proclaimed the nation. Perhaps of all the nations of Europe the English are the stiffest and most formal in their correspondence, more especially with those to whom they are personally unknown, and who are their inferiors in rank or social position. If a gentleman or lady, when absent from home, has occasion to write a letter of instructions to a male or female servant, the style is studiously dry and laconic as a telegram; and contains no word of compliment or courtesy. When Jones writes to Brown, whom he has never seen, he addresses him as "Sir," and subscribes himself "Your obedient humble servant;" though he is neither obedient nor humble, and would be offended if you really considered him

to be so. When Brown writes to Robinson, with whom he is on more or less friendly terms, the word "Sir" is too stiff for intimacy, and he addresses him as "Dear sir," or "My dear sir," or "Dear Robinson," or "My dear Robinson;" and subscribes himself "Yours very truly," or "Yours very sincerely," or "Yours faithfully," or "Yours very faithfully." When love-letters are in question the style warms, and the "dears," and the "darlings," and the "devotedlies," and the "affectionatelies," come into play. With these I shall not presume to meddle. They are of the tender follies of the best period of human life, and not to be turned into ridicule either by the hard head or the hard heart, unless in a law court in a case of breach of promise. It is with the ordinary style of address only that I presume to treat, than which nothing more formal and unmeaning can well be imagined. Take for instance the title of esquire, which means a shield-bearer. There are no shields in our days except in the theatres, consequently, there are no shield-bearers. The title, even when it was a reality, and signified a true thing, meant no more than a neophyte in the profession of arms, and a servant to a superior, who was called a chevalier, a knight, a rider, or a horseman. Everybody with a decent coat upon his back among the Anglo-Saxon, or more properly the Celto-Saxon races in Great Britain and America, considers himself entitled to be called a shield-bearer, and should the highly respectable John Brown (esquire) be addressed as Mr. John Brown, he comes to the conclusion before he opens the peccant epistle that it was either despatched by somebody who meant to insult him, or by a plaguy attorney dunning him for a debt.

In this respect the French are more sensible. They have no esquires at all, and Monsieur is as high a title as they usually bestow. The eldest son of the old kings of the Bourbon line was Monsieur par excellence—the Monsieur who took precedence over all other Messieurs whatsoever. They have, however, a far greater variety of epistolary phraseology than the English, and subscribe their letters after a fashion, which to an Englishman seems remarkably roundabout, cumbrous, and affected. If they begin with the "Dear sir"—"Cher monsieur"—they end with the lumbering phrase, "Recevez, monsieur, l'assurance de la haute consideration avec laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'être votre très

humble et très obéissant serviteur." "Receive, sir, the assurance of the high consideration with which I have the honour to be, your very obedient humble servant." The term of human life ought to extend to at least a hundred and fifty years, if people who write many letters are to append such perorations as this, or others equally wire-drawn, which the French delight to employ. The Germans are even more punctilious, and it requires long study of their language and long acquaintance with the people to be able to decide whether a man is simply to be called "Mein Herr" (sir) or "Hochgeboren er Herr" (high-born sir), or "Hoch und wohl geboren er Herr" (high and well-born sir), or "Edel-geboren er Herr" (nobly-born sir), or "Hoch wohl und Edelgeboren er Herr" (or high, well, and nobly-born sir), or, worse or best of all, "Durch lauchtigste!" (most serene). And as in English parlance the strictly grammatical and poetical "thou," the proper pronoun to be employed when addressing a single individual, has been superseded by the plural "you," which means several individuals, so in German the "thou" and the "you" have both been superseded, and a single person is designated "they," as in the phrase "Wie befinden sie sich?" "How do they find themselves?" instead of "How do you do?" The courteous Italians designate every equal and superior as "Your grace" or "Your excellency," and speak to every one as "she" or "her." "I will visit you," is rendered "I will visit her," the feminine pronoun doing duty for the feminine nouns, Grace and Excellency, which are always understood, though not always expressed.

In business letters the Italians never use the words Caro signore, or Dear sir, as the English do, but address their correspondent as "Pregiatissimo signore," or "Stimatissimo signore," Most esteemed sir, varying the style of address by such epithets as "Honourable," "Illustrious," "Most gentle," "Most noble." If you addressed your tailor or bootmaker by letter, neither would be surprised, or offended, or suspicious of a joke, if you wrote on the envelope "Illustrissimo signore," Most illustrious sir, and signed yourself "Vostro devotissimo," Your most devoted. These are the usual forms employed by the bulk of the people, by tradesmen, artisans, clerks, milliners, servants, and others, and a servant-girl would not think well of any lover who did not address her as "Illustrissima

signora." The following letter, translated verbatim, was addressed, after a quarrel at a drinking bout, by one angry disputant to another, whom he challenged to a duel:

MOST ESTEEMED SIR,—Permit me to inform you that you are a pig. Yes, my beloved one. It is my intention in a short time to spoil your beauty, either by sword or pistol. The choice shall be left to you, as both weapons are to me quite indifferent. Hoping soon to have the pleasure of a cherished answer, I declare myself to be, honourable sir,

Yours most devotedly,  
CARLAVERO.

The stately Spaniards, in addressing a letter of business to a commercial firm, instead of the "Sir" or "Gentlemen" of the English, or the "Monsieur" or "Messieurs" of the French, write "Muy señor mio" or "Muy señores nuestros," or "My very sir," or "Our very sirs," and subscribe themselves "Your very attentive," or "Your very obedient servants."

It seems to me that in this busy age the letter-writers of all the world would do well to amend their style of address, and revert to the simple phraseology employed by the ancient Romans. How truly courteous was the Roman method. If Lucius Verus wished to write to Scipio Africanus, he did not begin "My dear Scipio," and end with "Yours very truly," but went straight to the point, and said, "Lucius Verus to Scipio Africanus, greeting;" after which, without further palaver, he would proceed to business. Would it not be a saving of time if we were to imitate this excellent old fashion? And why should not Smith minimise trouble by addressing Brown after the classical method: "Smith to Brown, greeting. Send me ten tons of your best coals—lowest price;" or "Jones to Robinson, greeting. Will you dine with me next Thursday at the Megatherium at six precisely?" The one word "greeting" includes all that is necessary in the way either of friendship or politeness, and would answer every purpose in the ordinary intercourse of life. But it would never do for love-letters. These always did, and always will, stand apart as a literature by themselves, governed by their own laws, by their own impulses. Had a Roman lover simply sent a "greeting" to his Lesbia or his Aspasia, Lesbia or Aspasia, if able to read, which in all probability she was

not, would have had fair cause to complain of his coldness. So I except the love-letters.

## A SICILIAN STORY.

### IN SIX CHAPTERS.

#### CHAPTER III. FAREWELL!

MASO was inconsolable. He blamed himself for his violence at one moment, at another he cursed Tonino. The priest, the doctor, the wise women who came in to help at all the births and deaths of the village, hastened to offer their assistance to the bereaved family, but they all were agreed that the poor girl had always been too delicate to live. The woman at whose house she worked, the girls who worked with her, all testified to the same extreme fragility of health. She had once or twice fainted over her work, but every one had hoped she would be better when the summer was over. The doctor declared that in his opinion the heart was diseased from her birth. Maso would listen to nothing. Lucia was alive yesterday! She was dead to-day! He could take in no other idea.

Lucia was borne to her grave by six of her young companions. The bier was a bed of flowers. The fairest though frailest blossom was the still pure face of the dead girl.

In a week all went on apparently as usual in the old house of Torre Mela, but in reality there was a dreary change. Rosa mourned over her living husband as much as over her dead child.

Maso had been industrious, he was now idle; he had been sweet-tempered, he was now feverishly irritable. Before, he had been taciturn, now he was morose. He rarely went to the village, and never spoke at home. Weeks, months, two years passed—Maso was incurable. Diomira was tall, and growing the very image of Lucia. Rosa would try to draw her husband's attention to the girl, hoping she might, in time, replace the lost one. It was in vain; he would caress her, take her head between his hands, and gaze fixedly at her, and then, after putting her lips to his forehead, would turn away with a groan, and murmur "Lucia!"

The fortunes of the family suffered from this change in Maso. While they possessed Torre Mela, they could not absolutely starve, but money, that is coin, became rarer and rarer. The death of Lucia seemed to have opened the way to a whole

series of misfortunes. The vine disease became more and more virulent. An earthquake caused a landslip, and what had been once their most productive field, became a confused mass of stones, and sand, slanting earth-mounds, and uprooted trees.

Maso was imperturbable through all. No deeper shade was on his brow than that which settled there the morning he had found his favourite child a corpse, but that shadow had never passed away. Don Luigi, the priest, advised change of air and total change of scene as the one remaining chance to cure him of the helpless stupor into which he had fallen.

Fortunately, at this juncture, an uncle of Rosa's, who lived at Leonforte, a village sixty miles north-west of Torre Mela, wrote to his niece, complaining that she had never made him acquainted with her husband or her children, that he was old and infirm, and alone, and needed some of his relatives to come to him. Why did not his niece or her husband, or some of the children, visit their old uncle, who was going to leave them all he had in the world?

"You should go, Maso," said the priest, who had read the letter to the family; "you can be spared now the winter is coming on; it is right for you to go."

Some of the restlessness which belongs to great unhappiness induced Maso to consent to this proposition.

The evening before he left, he and Rosa sat on the low wall of the yard of the house which looked seawards over their ruined fields, and, after a long and profound silence, he began to speak of his departure.

"I have been helpless, like a man in a bad dream, these two years, Rosa; but after this journey I shall be better; if I return, I shall work as before."

"Why do you say if, Maso; why should you not return?"

"Life is so uncertain, Rosa mia; do we not know it too well? And then in this wretched country there are brigands, who are more active than ever this year."

"Brigands do not seek poor men."

"True, but they might seize me, knowing your uncle is rich, though poor old Meo would not pay ransom for me, I think."

"I would, though; I would sell everything, my vizzo (necklace), our house, our fields. They might take every barrel of oil, every sack of flour, if they would give you back to me."

Rosa clasped her hands with the energy with which she spoke.

"Do you remember Checco?" said Maso, gloomily.

"He whose family had refused the sum for his ransom, and they brought him under the very windows of his home, and obliged him, with the knife at his throat, to call on his wife to open the door."

"He called, she opened to him, they rushed into the house, murdered every one in it, and stripped it."

"And poor Checco cut his throat when he saw what he had done."

Rosa shuddered as she spoke.

"Checco was a coward," went on Maso.

"They might have tortured me to death, before they got a word from me. With my living lips I would never call on you. If you were ever to hear a voice at such a moment, believe it is my spirit and not I."

"Do not frighten me, Maso, with such chances. I feel we shall not be any more 'tribolati;' return soon, whatever happens; but I am sure brighter days will begin, now you are more like yourself."

And Rosa, who was not the least imaginative, and who was pleased to hear Maso speaking a little more like himself, shook all fears from her mind, and held her little boy up to be kissed by his father. It was the old yet ever new Homeric scene. The father took off his heavy, slouching cap, and, bareheaded, clasped his child in his arms, and invoked blessings on him and on his mother.

The two little girls joined them. They had been cutting the grass for the cattle. They carried the bundles on their heads. Their slender girlish figures were almost hidden beneath the fragrant loads, while through the curling tendrils and sprays, the poppies and corn-flowers, the black eyes and glowing cheeks of Menica, and the fairer paler face of Diomira (who had sweet soft eyes like Lucia's), peeped out as the faces of wood-nymphs might have peeped out in pagan times from their woods and sylvan retreats.

"The children have been quick," said Rosa; "now let us go to supper. Is not Diomira like——"

"Hush!" said Maso, putting his hand on her mouth. "Do not say anything which will make me mad again."

They went in and had supper. Maso was calmer and more composed than he had been since Lucia's death.

He was to leave the next morning, and his simple preparations were soon made. They retired to rest.



Rosa, tired with the day's labour, and the emotions of the impending parting, was soon asleep; Maso, on the contrary, was excited. He could not close his eyes. Towards morning he raised himself on his elbow, and bending over, looked at his wife long and intently. He seemed to explore her countenance as if he would imprint every feature indelibly on his heart.

It was a placid, beautiful face, with the dome-like forehead, the oval cheek, the straight well-cut nose, which are peculiar to handsome Italians. The full eyelids and long lashes gave great softness to it, and round the mouth was the slight mournfulness which all adult faces wear in sleep. Speechless blessings rose to the poor man's dumb lips as he looked on the faithful, tender, true companion of his life, "the heart of his heart," as he sometimes called her. He was dimly conscious that he had added to her late grief by the violence of his own, and he felt how good, and brave, and uncomplaining she had been.

He gazed and gazed, and then without waking her, rose, dressed himself, and went out of the room. He paused for a moment at the threshold of the room (Lucia's formerly), where the two girls now slept. He sighed heavily. He had never passed through the entrance of that room since that fatal morning Lucia had been borne from it, and he shuddered as he turned away. And then, stick in hand and bundle on shoulder, he passed out.

As he strode up the village street in the faint morning light, he met the priest coming down to see some sick person. The good man was often sent for as a healer of bodies as well as of souls. He stopped for a moment to speak to Maso. He was unfeignedly pleased that Maso had made up his mind to leave Torre Mela for awhile.

"When do you return, Maso?"

"Perhaps in three months; but your reverence knows that one may be delayed on such a journey."

They stood talking just opposite the house which belonged to the elder Voghera. The same thought arose in the minds of the two, but Maso only frowned and bit his lip.

"He has never been seen here since that day," said the priest. "He is in the mountains, I believe. There is a band making the most daring depredations, and committing acts of the most atrocious cruelty under a chief called Satanello, in the direction of Leonforte, and some of us

think it is Tonino. I shall pray, my son, that you do not meet him."

"If I did," said Maso, fiercely, "I would string him up like a dog."

"My son, forgive, as you would be forgiven."

Maso stared at him as if he did not understand him.

"I do not ask to be forgiven if that is the price of forgiveness," he murmured, and went on his way.

#### CHAPTER IV. GONE.

THREE, four, five months passed away, and nothing was heard of Maso. Direct communication between Leonforte and Torre Mela was impossible. The post came, via Messina, at irregular intervals, and Rosa had never expected Maso to write. But she longed for the time of the vintage to come, when unemployed peasants at Torre Mela would go to Leonforte to assist in the vintage, and return late in the autumn. Meanwhile she had little time for indulging speculative fears. She drudged all day, and worked her fingers to the bone to support her family. Her daughters helped her, but Diomira resembled Lucia in delicacy of constitution, as well as in personal beauty, and could do little.

The vintage time came, and had all but passed away, and no tidings of Maso had yet been brought to Torre Mela. Rosa would stand of an evening, by the low wall which bounded her possessions, and watch the labourers as they returned in groups of twos and threes from their labours. For many weeks it was in vain; at last one evening she observed some stragglers advancing directly towards her house, instead of turning off at the angle which led to the village. She clasped her hands, and her breath came short. They had news for her, she was sure. She hastened down, as fast as her agitation would permit her, to meet them.

The first approached her, and said:

"The priest of Leonforte sends you this letter. Your uncle is dead, and has left you everything. House, orchards, and gold in the bank, and money in the house. You are a rich woman, Siora Rosa."

Rosa uttered but one word in reply to this harangue—"Maso?" They shook their heads in silence. She looked wildly from one to the other. "Have you not seen him?"

"Sanguè della Madonna, he has never been to Leonforte; here is your letter."

She could not read it, but she held it

tight, and flew to the priest with it. He was smoking outside his door.

"What is it, Rosa mia?"

"Read," she said, as she held him up the letter.

He opened it, and there found, expressed with all the circumlocution, the four-syllabled words, the cumbrous courtesies of an Italian professional scribe's letter, the news.

It was true; the whole property, the farm, cattle, and podere, were all hers, and a sum of money besides. It distinctly stated, however, that the old man had died without having seen one of his relatives.

Rosa clasped her hands tight over her head and burst into tears. The one reality to her, in these tidings, was the fact that Maso had never reached Leonforte. The rest was shadowy and intangible. She rocked herself to and fro, she shivered as she thought of the weary months of absence which she had passed, and of the long barren years which she would have to pass, alone and bereaved. Maso was dead, or he would have returned to her, or proceeded to her uncle. There was no doubt of it. Her children were fatherless. She was a widow.

The priest touched her arm, and made her look at him. He tried to rouse her by speaking on the subject of her inheritance, but it was too early. She listened vaguely. Her brain refused to take in a thought which, for the present, had no meaning for her. At last he accompanied her home. He thought the sight of her children would rouse her.

As they passed down the street there was a little crowd gathered outside. Some wished to congratulate, some wished to condole, but all were curious to see her, and hands were held out to her, and words of condolence and congratulation were murmured, but she shook her head and passed on. Some of the ill-natured ones declared her good fortune had made her proud. But the fact was, the shyness which often accompanies a shock of fate benumbed her. She felt that a great gulf of bereavement divided her now from all her old familiar gossips and acquaintances.

"You have no father now, my darlings," said the poor mother, sitting on her hearth with her little flock around her, and then her own words stabbed her with the conviction that no possible doubt remained now she had uttered the dreadful fact herself, and then she sobbed afresh.

All night, after the children had gone to

bed, she sat up, trying to realise what had happened. How? when? where? Her last gloomy forebodings returned to her. Had he been taken by the brigands, or had there been some private vendetta? If so, Tonino was the assassin. Oh God, what a fate! And then, with an effort at self-control, she thought of the other event, the wealth she had inherited, which, while it added to her anxieties and responsibilities on the one hand, diminished, on the other, many of her most painful fears. The children would now be saved from the privation and the toil which for the last two years had been their portion. And she must not cloud over their young lives with the sadness which, with her, would increase with every turn of the road she had now to tread.

A month later Rosa arrived at Leonforte.

Leonforte is a small town encircled by hills. These hills slope upwards, and join that chain of mountains which runs from Messina right across Sicily. The largest house in Leonforte was old Meco's (Rosa's uncle). It was called Torre del Campanello, or Belfry Tower, from a machicolated (fourteenth century) turret crowning it, in which was a huge bell. This bell communicated with a room below in the turret, where the old man had slept, and his bed was so placed that he could easily pull the rope attached to this large bell, and ring an alarum, which would rouse the whole village, if he needed assistance. The house was like a miniature fortress. It stood on higher ground than Leonforte, and a steep road led from the front door to the village. At the back of the house was a small semi-circular platform, thickly studded with bushes; beyond the platform was what seemed a sheer precipice. The rocky ravine below was called by the peasantry the Valle Nera, and was bounded by a bare wall of stone called Rocca Nera, which rose abruptly on the other side, and barred all access to the valley, except by a narrow footpath which skirted it, and, by many a wind and zigzag, sloped into it at the other end.

Leonforte had of late acquired a most guilty notoriety, from some unusually bloody outrages committed by brigands in its neighbourhood during the last few months.

Continual communication was going on on this subject between Catania and Messina and Leonforte, and as there was much political reaction mixed up with the desire

for unlawful greed, a high price was set on the head of Satanello, the man who was known to be the chief of the brigands in that district, and who was also suspected to be in the pay of the Bourbon. The most urgent orders for his arrest were sent to the syndic, but hitherto Satanello had escaped.

Like most villagers who make their home on the slopes of Vesuvius, the inhabitants of Leonforte had been so hardened by a constant menace of peril that they had ceased to fear it.

Meo had been, however, an exception. To be sure his house was more isolated than any other, and he was the wealthiest man in Leonforte.

The neighbours magnified his wealth in proportion to his anxieties and suspicions. It was said that in stray corners and cupboards little hoards of money were deposited, and besides the money in the bank and in the "cassa di risparmio" (savings bank), it was commonly reported in the village that if certain bricks were raised in the kitchen or in the old man's bedroom, bags of piastres would have been discovered.

"It would never have surprised me if I had heard that Satanello had tried to sack the place," said one of her neighbours to Rosa the night of her arrival in Leonforte (they had all assembled to greet her). "I believe the house, as it stands, is worth more than twenty thousand lire."

"The old fellow must have been very rich to make such a fortification of his house; look at that door, there is more iron than wood in it; it is clamped all over with nails not an inch apart; and look at the bars and the 'inferiate' outside."

"I am glad," said Rosa, dejectedly, "for I am all alone. My boys are young, and my girls—"

"How old is that pretty fair one holding her brother's hand?"

"Diomira? She is nearly sixteen."

"How delicate she looks!"

"Yes." Rosa sighed. Diomira did indeed look fragile, as fragile as Lucia.

"Shall you occupy your uncle's room?"

"Yes, Diomira and I, and Menica and the boys in the next."

"If anything should occur call us; there is the campanellone; only touch that and the whole of the 'borgo' will be roused. Do you hear, pretty one?" said one of the women to Diomira. "If you are frightened just pull that thick rope, and we will come to you in a mezzo minuto."

Diomira nodded. Rosa felt satisfied now they were not quite unprotected, and was less anxious than at first at the sight of the manifold evidences of wealth around her. The handles of the knives and the forks and spoons were all of solid silver; so were the lucerne (the Italian household lamp), and the lattice work of the unglazed cupboards was silver-gilt.

Rosa did not intend to remain in the Belfry Tower. She resolved to let the house and lands till her eldest son was old enough to take the management of it himself. It was necessary, therefore, to select and pack, and make lists of all the house contained.

The ordinary course of business is always slow in Italy, and especially so in Sicily, and the months were passing on and stretching themselves into a year, and still Rosa was not at the end of her labours.

It was now nearly two years since Maso had left her, four years and a half since Lucia's death. Rosa was changed. The two years might have been twenty from their effect on her, bodily and mentally. Her beauty was almost gone, and her placid sweetness had become a nervous, reticent, and anxious sadness. She had confided her sorrows to no one. Nothing was known of her but that she was a widow.

The gossips little knew how her blood ran cold at the tales they used to recount to her of the violence and cruelty of the brigands. The demoniacal outrages, the barbarous mutilations, the cold-blooded murders she heard of froze the blood in her veins, and haunted her slumbers with a sad prophetic significance.

None of these tales, however, were of recent date, until one evening, about a year after her arrival, as she sat sewing in the court-yard in front of the house, first one, then another, and finally several of the neighbours rushed up to her in the greatest agitation.

"Have you heard the news, Siora Rosa?"

"No."

"Pasquale has been taken."

"Pasquale, the sacristan's brother?"

"Yes; he is a tailor, you know, and he went to Priola to take home some work, and to be paid for it. That was four days ago. To-day, the day he ought to have returned, his brother has received a packet with a letter from" (he lowered his voice and looked round) "Satanello!"

"Madonna mia."

"Yes, left it in the most mysterious way, but addressed to him. In it was a finger."

"A finger!"

"Yes, a finger; Pasquale's."

"Dio buono!"

"The letter was written as clearly and as straight as if our own village scribe had written it, and said that if one thousand lire were not paid in a fortnight from to-day the hand should be cut off, and if fifteen hundred were not paid at the end of another fortnight the other hand, and so on."

"Good God, look at the poor woman!"

"She has fainted."

"She looks like one dead—oh! what a good heart she has."

Poor Rosa! it had, indeed, been too terrible a tale for her to listen to calmly. She had a sudden, awful intuition that such might have been, nay, that such had been, Maso's fate. Maso, who would die a thousand deaths rather than let his captors know from whence he came, that there might be no negotiations for a ransom possible.

The neighbours, seeing she was too agitated to listen to them any more, left her, but, as may be supposed, her violent emotion did not pass uncommented on by them.

"What could it be?" they whispered among themselves; "had her husband met his end in the same way?—had there been no possibility of his paying ransom?—or was it" (and her melancholy was more than natural, who had ever seen so rich a widow so inconsolable?) "that poor Siora Rosa's husband, had, or was——" And here significant gestures of having gone to the mountains were made, and words and hints were dropped, until, with the rapidly accumulating force of village gossip, it was finally universally believed that Rosa's dead husband must have been a brigand himself.

Verysoon these murmurs and innuendoes reached the ears of the syndic himself, Don Vincenzo Maderna.

Maderna was a fiery, pig-headed, little Neapolitan, with an exaggerated sense of his own responsibility, and two ambitions, which equally consumed him, and wore the flesh off his bones. One was to gain a terno and be a winner to a large amount in the lottery. Winning a terno is when three of the five numbers one chooses is drawn out. The other ambition was to capture Satanello.

The despatches on this last matter, which

he constantly received from the prefect at Messina, considerably aggrieved him.

"That fine gentleman," he would say, "little knows the state of things about here, or he would write with more 'reguardi' to a man who has become grey in the public service. Half the people here are the 'manutengoli' (agents) of the brigands; the other half pay them black mail, I know, and if one of the contributions required was my head, I do not think they would hesitate long enough to let me say a pternoster. He is an ass, is the prefect."

This capture of Pasquale was a blow to the syndic. He was the friend of both brothers. The sacristan and the tailor were two excellent men. He wished to ransom Pasquale, but where was the money to come from? If he could secure Satanello, he would get the money which had been set on his head, and so pay himself if he advanced it; but the question was, how could he advance it? and, besides, how was he to capture Satanello?

He bit his fingers, walked up and down his office, opened his money-drawer with a jerk, and shut it with a slam, but no violence of gesture or motion could bring the required sum into that receptacle.

Days passed, and only three remained of the fortnight's grace, when, as the syndic was sitting alone, "blaspheming," as he afterwards shamelessly confessed, in his office-room, he was told a "sposa" wanted to see him.

"Passi, passi," said the little man, courteously.

The woman entered; it was Rosa.

"What can I do for you, Siora Rosa?" said the bellicose little syndic in his softest voice; and he wondered if there could be any truth in the gossip about her.

She looked so sad and so agitated. She carried a casket in her hand.

"I have come, Signor Sindaco——" she said, eagerly, and then stopped.

"Cara sci," said the syndic (I must add he was an unmarried man), "what is the matter? Do you find the cares of your inheritance too much for you; women, I know, can spend money, but always find taking care of it irksome; what is it?"

"I wanted to ask you to take these thousand lire."

"Dio la benedica."

"And send them as ransom for Pasquale."

"Impossible! How do you expect Pasquale will ever pay you; he will want two



lives, not one, to do so. It is horrible to think of, but no one can save him; the government cannot. Think what a fine game it would be for the brigands if the state ransomed their victims, and who else can help him?"

"I will."

"What will your children say when they are old enough to know what you have done; this is half the sum in the savings bank. I know old Meo's affairs well."

"He must be saved."

"What would your poor husband say if he were alive?"

Rosa started, as if he had touched her with a hot iron; but she controlled herself. "Think of Pasquale's wife and children!"

She looked so imploring, that the syndic was overcome at last, and took the money and gave her a receipt for it.

"How do you send?"

"Oh, it is all arranged in his infernal letter. The man I send with the money is to go to the Osteria del Pellicano, two miles on the Villa d'Oro road. He will find there a man who will show him a receipt. They will leave the osteria together, and at a certain distance, my man will give the money and Pasquale will be given to him."

"Could I go with the man you send?" asked Rosa, timidly. All her reflections after she had heard of Pasquale's fate had convinced her that Satanello was Tonino, and that he, and he alone, knew the secret of Maso's disappearance. She thought it probable he would fetch the money himself, and she, if she were permitted to accompany the syndic's messenger, would implore him, for the sake of his former love for her dead child, to tell her what he had done with Maso.

The syndic, on hearing her proposal, started up like a jack-in-the-box.

"You?"

"I want to ask one single question of the man who takes the money."

"Bah!" he stifled the oath that rose to his lips; "you must cross-examine Pasquale himself, if you want news of the brigands;" he spoke with a rougher accent than he had used hitherto; "if the devils saw you, there would be an end of the business; they would murder the man I send and Pasquale too, and carry you off; what sort of a ransom would they ask for a rich hand-

some woman like you, do you think?" The syndic wondered whether Rosa wished to warn her husband, for he now felt convinced that he was connected with the brigands, was perhaps, indeed, the chief himself. "Good Heaven!" he muttered, and the little parched pea of a man was nearly crossing himself at the idea as he looked at Rosa's pale sad face, "what utter fools women are."

"Here is your receipt," he said out loud; "but I take the money on the condition that you will not carry out your intention."

Rosa hung her head.

"Let no one know you have advanced the money, or we shall have half the village carried off. They will work on your soft heart as people dig in a mine."

"If I could but learn—" began Rosa, but she checked herself, her sorrows had made her so reticent.

"Pst, pst, you must find out all you want from Pasquale."

When he was alone Don Vincenzo drew his heavy black eyebrows together, and thought and thought, and smoked several cigars, and finally made up his plans.

With the aptitude we all have of thinking ill rather than well of our fellow-creatures, the syndic firmly believed that Satanello himself was the husband of the handsome melancholy widow of the Belfry Tower.

He called up a gendarme, gave him the ransom, told him where to go, and bade him, on his life, open his eyes and ears, so as to obtain on the road every possible information which might eventually be of use. He then wrote in cipher to Messina and informed the prefect he had found a clue by which he believed he should trace and finally capture Satanello himself. He asked for more soldiers, but as he did not wish to excite suspicion, they must drop in by twos and threes dressed as ordinary peasants. He was convinced that he should win the distinction he had so long thirsted for, and if he did, would not the hour and the number of the day of the week, and of the day of the month, be lucky numbers for the lottery! The Belfry Tower should be watched night and day, and as soon as a sufficient number of men had arrived they should be placed so as to surround the house and guard it. The fair widow should not warn her husband, if it were in his power to prevent it.